

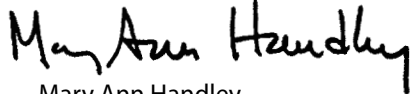
Dear Neighbor,

I want to bring you up to date on initiatives and legislative accomplishments from the recently-concluded special sessions. You will find this information summarized in my newsletter, and I hope that you will take a moment to read it through.

In recent years, the work of the General Assembly has not been limited to the constitutionally established regular session. Much work is accomplished during special sessions. While the legislature is designed to be a part-time institution, many legislators work overtime to ensure that we meet our responsibilities and your expectations.

I wish to thank you for taking the time to contact me during the past year to voice your opinions on the critical issues facing our state. I look forward to discussing these and other issues with you.

My very best wishes in the New Year.



Mary Ann Handley  
State Senator, 4th District



STATE SENATOR

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## STATE SENATOR **MARY ANN HANDLEY**

### 2005 SPECIAL SESSIONS

Although the 2005 Legislative Session ended in June, we have been meeting in special sessions in order to target critical issues affecting healthcare coverage, energy and public safety. We passed legislation on the following issues:

#### **HUSKY for Children**

It was imperative that the General Assembly take action once the Department of Social Services announced that 2,200 children would lose coverage from the HUSKY health insurance program because their families could not afford the increase in premiums. The bill we passed restored funding to the state budget, thereby preventing higher premiums from taking effect.

#### **Health Care Benefits: ConnPACE and Medicare Part D**

Many seniors who take advantage of Connecticut's excellent prescription drug program, ConnPACE, and certain Medicaid recipients, are concerned about coverage gaps once Medicare Part D takes effect. Recently passed legislation ensures that these individuals will continue to receive the same comprehensive coverage at no additional cost. The CHOICES Program provides information and can answer questions about changes to Medicare Part D. The program's toll-free phone number is **1-800-994-9422**.



#### **Energy Assistance**

With record energy prices expected this winter, a bill was approved to help low and moderate income families cope with rising costs of energy. The energy assistance bill: 1) increases benefits for eligible households; 2) provides new funding under the Contingency Heating Assistance Program; and 3) applies a sales tax exemption from November 25, 2005–April 1, 2006 on certain weatherization products, including furnaces. For more information, contact the Department of Social Services at **1-800-842-1132**.

#### **Campaign Finance Reform**

I am proud to report to you that we recently enacted landmark campaign finance reform legislation that is regarded as the strongest in the country. The new act provides for public financing of campaigns at the state level beginning with the 2008 election for legislative offices and the 2010 election for statewide elected offices. This act bans lobbyist and state contractor contributions to candidates for state offices and will severely limit the influence of special interests.

## OPEN SPACE FUNDING FOR GLASTONBURY AND THE 4TH DISTRICT



Communities in the Fourth District will receive four separate open space grants that total more than \$448,000 and will help secure 151 acres for open space in Glastonbury and Manchester. The state funding is part of the DEP's Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program. Glastonbury will receive approximately \$277,000 to secure 116 acres comprised of the Cavanaugh Property and the Marchand Property; the Kongscut Land Trust, Inc. will also acquire the 9-acre Civitillo Property. Manchester is in line for \$60,840 to acquire 26 acres on Case Mountain.